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## NEWS AND NOTES

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### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SPEAKING CONFERENCE OF THE EASTERN CENTRAL STATES

The third annual meeting of the Public Speaking Conference of the Eastern Central States was held in Columbus, Ohio, November 6 to 8, 1913. Eighteen representatives of colleges and universities in Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, and Kentucky were present and took part in the discussions. In the absence of the president of the Conference, Professor Robert I. Fulton (Ohio Wesleyan University), the vice-president, Professor Arthur L. Gates (Miami University), presided.

The aim of this Conference is to standardize the work in public speaking in colleges and universities of the states represented; to fix a minimum of requirement where the work is necessarily limited by conditions and circumstances; and to open wherever possible wider fields for the important and practical work of oral expression. The Conference realizes that although many colleges and universities have shown a due appreciation of public speaking work, and all that it embraces, by establishing and maintaining on a dignified equality with other departments a department of public speaking, many others have not yet so dignified the work, and the instructors in such institutions are obliged to adapt their teaching to meet conditions and to accomplish the greatest possible good without lowering the standards of efficiency. Accordingly, in connection with the discussion of the main topics brought up for consideration—oratorical composition, brief-drawing, argumentation, extempore address, and interpretative public speaking—the Conference passed the following resolutions regarding the minimum requirement:

#### FIRST-YEAR COURSE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

What is known as the First-Year Course in Public Speaking shall embrace only such mechanics of speech (technical training in speech) as shall be considered absolutely necessary.

The object of the course shall be to develop the student's powers of expression through a primary appeal to his thought.

#### SECOND-YEAR COURSE—ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE

For the first half of the academic year, this course should include the theory of argumentation and debate, and afford opportunity for practice in analysis, brief-drawing, and the use of evidence.

For the second half of the year, the course should consist of class debates. Bibliographies, briefs, and all evidence collected should be submitted to the instructor for examination and criticism.

This should be a three-hour course throughout the year.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Professor Arthur L. Gates, Miami University; Vice-President, Professor C. Edmund Neil, University of West Virginia; Secretary-Treasurer, Professor Harry B. Gough, DePauw University.

The next meeting of the Conference will be held in Richmond, Indiana, during the Thanksgiving recess, 1914.

B. C. VAN WYE, *Secretary-Treasurer*

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

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#### THE NEW ENGLAND ORAL ENGLISH AND PUBLIC-SPEAKING CONFERENCE

The New England Oral English and Public-Speaking Conference, organized last spring, held its first regular meeting at Harvard University, December 31 and January 1. Professor Irvah L. Winter of Harvard, president of the Association, in the opening address, discussed past and present conditions and suggested work for the Association. His main ideas were that oral training can be of real value and have a worthy place in general education only by its being regarded as an essential part of regular training in English; that training in thinking and in expression, oral and written, should go together; that the teaching in oral work should be done mainly by teachers of English; that oral expression by itself, or as an end in itself, can never have a well-recognized place in school and college; that prize contests and public exhibitions are in themselves of little value and may be harmful, and that as substitutes for regular courses of instruction, such as they are likely to become, they should be discouraged. He advised that associations like this in various sections of the country choose committees for co-operative action in investigating conditions and making recommendations with a view to securing a fixed, definite place for regular oral training in school courses, a means which some years ago effected such remarkable results in the matter of improving instruction in English. Later in the session a committee was authorized for inquiring into conditions in New England and making report at the next regular meeting.

President-emeritus Charles W. Eliot, of Harvard University, addressed the Conference on the general value of oral training. He

said that never in the history of the country has there been a time when oral address has had so much use and influence as it has today. He emphasized the fact that in his own administrative work his care to gain the ability to make a clear succinct statement in the form of speech has been a great, almost an indispensable, asset to him, and he had, he said, frequently observed the same fact in the case of others. Many suggestions were offered as to the ways in which oral training might be introduced into school instruction.

Papers were read by Professor E. C. Black, of Boston University, and Professor J. W. Wetzel, of Yale, on "Oral English"; by Professor Prentiss C. Hoyt, of Clark College, Professor W. H. Davis, of Bowdoin, and Professor A. T. Robinson, of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on "Public Speaking"; by Professor George P. Baker of Harvard, Professor Thomas Crosby, Jr., of Brown University, and Professor Lewis Perry, of Williams College, on "The Drama in School and College"; and by Professor H. B. Huntington, of Brown, Mr. A. P. Stone, of Harvard, and Mr. W. C. Shaw, of Dartmouth, on "Debating."

Almost every college in New England was represented, and discussion was entered into also by instructors or principals from Exeter, Andover, and other preparatory schools. A decidedly strong interest was shown and every moment of a rather prolonged session was filled with discussion.

The existing officers were re-elected as follows: President, Mr. Irvah L. Winter, Harvard University; Vice-President, Mr. Thomas Crosby, Jr., Brown University; Vice-President, Mr. Lewis Perry, Williams College; Secretary, Mr. John Corsa, Amherst College; Treasurer, Mr. William H. Davis, Bowdoin College; Executive Committee: The officers and Miss Malvina Bennett, Wellesley College, Mr. Arthur P. Stone, Harvard University; Membership Committee: Mr. John Wetzel, chairman, Yale University; Mr. Grosvenor M. Robinson, Bates College; Mr. Henry G. Pearson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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#### COLLEGE CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH IN THE CENTRAL ATLANTIC STATES

The second annual meeting of the College Conference on English brought out between fifty and sixty people. The program proved to be a live one. The summaries below are only vague hints of the direction taken by the full discussions, and serve rather to open than to close the questions involved.

The general topic of the meeting was the Teaching of Freshman English. The first paper was on "The Correction of Papers," by Professor Lane Cooper, of Cornell University. This really means the correction of one personality by another. Between the two lies the vernacular, which is primarily something spoken. The first demand we make of it is that it represent such truths as deserve communication. Accordingly, the student must be provided with materials of thought before he writes; he must have a mind that is worth correcting. And the corrector must be trained in all that is essential to the study of the English language and literature. He ought not to be a person who affects to despise scholarship. He ought not to be overburdened, stultified, or disheartened with the reading of excessive amounts of uninspiring manuscript. He must be a living well of English undefiled. Take care of the correctors, and the students will be properly corrected.

The next paper was on "The Relation of Freshman English to the Work in Other Departments," by Professor Horace A. Eaton, Syracuse University. The hope of impressing a habit of good English upon Freshmen depends on the complete co-operation of all teachers in all subjects toward that end. Teachers in other subjects, as well as in English, should fail students for carelessness in English grammar, spelling, and punctuation; they should oblige students so careless to take special work in English; they should require written work in their courses which might be appropriate for criticism by the teachers of English as to matters of style in the broader sense; they should especially try to cultivate in the student the ability to order facts and to draw logical conclusions. The English teacher, on the other hand, should encourage students to write upon subjects drawn from other courses, so that all work in composition may spring from knowledge and interest; he should always emphasize the side of self-expression rather than formal correctness; and should aim to make all composition a matter of life rather than of external imposition.

A different solution was offered by Professor C. G. Osgood, of Princeton University, who would have "No Requirement in Freshman English." Required courses in English composition have arisen from the twofold conviction that (1) he who is deficient in the power and proprieties of expression is not educated; and that (2) the power and proprieties of expression can, and should be, imparted by courses designed to that end and required of every student. But the defects at which such courses are aimed are found to be the results of deeper disorders—immaturity, sluggishness, infertility. Herein lies the real difficulty.

All teaching should therefore endeavor to overcome these fundamental defects, concerning itself with the very springs of the student's nature, actions, and expression. This can best be accomplished, not by teaching mere composition, but by the direct influence of good literature well taught. Hence there should be no required course in mere composition in the Freshman, or any other year.

Composition, however, should be taught, and this can best be done by making it ancillary to the greater teaching of literature. It may thus serve as the most effective means of developing, formulating, testing, appropriating the new ideas that are stirred up by the reading and discussion of literature. Such teaching demands genuine intimacy between teacher and student. It is being practiced successfully under the conditions provided by the so-called preceptorial method of instruction at Princeton.

A course in composition should be provided for students who wish it, near the end of their college period, when their intellectual resources have become fuller and more abundant, and when they can proceed in the art of composition much faster and farther than in a required course in earlier and shallower years.

"Oral Composition for Freshmen" was presented by Professor C. S. Baldwin, of Columbia University. Oral composition has been rediscovered by most teachers too recently to be at present always well applied. It is neither "elocution" nor manuscript read aloud or memorized, but composition made to be spoken to an audience. Its field being typically persuasion (including exposition), it differs from conversation and from Socratic discussion in being essentially consecutive. Through its general abeyance during many academic generations we have made unduly difficult the teaching of "elocution," sentence-structure, and paragraphs, have left many good scholars shy and clumsy, and in general have impaired our training in presentation. Besides widening our field, oral composition restores to argument its due place in teaching, gives composition reality by giving it immediacy, raises the moral standard of performance, practically teaches due amplification, and includes large simplicity of plan. At present its use is less in courses exclusively oral than in more general courses as subsidiary to written composition.

The discussion was opened by Superintendent W. H. Maxwell, of New York City. The greatest need today in the teaching of English is to give students the power to ascertain and express the meanings of words, for they have not a clear understanding of their own vocabulary.

Besides this, there are two reasons why composition work, either oral or written, is not as profitable as it might otherwise be: (1) the students do not have an aim in writing; and (2) they have nothing that they care to say. The first aim may be secured by making them understand that they are either to instruct or to entertain their classmates. The other trouble may at least be partly diminished by using material drawn from other subjects of study—a description of an experiment in physics or chemistry, a narrative in history, or even a translation from Latin or Greek or a modern language. Furthermore, little attention will be paid by students of whatever grade to red-ink emendations made by the teacher. Criticism should lead the student to criticize his own productions. For this purpose, the criticisms of his fellow-students are more valuable than even the closest conferences with his instructors.

The possibilities of this College Conference on English are so far only partly realized. No department in the college curriculum has such a variety of aims, content, and methods in courses supposed to cover the same field. Such differences of opinion among trained men indicate, among other things, two important facts about the teaching of English: it is in its formative period; and it is attracting the careful attention of many constructive scholars. Under such conditions, intercommunication of ideas is imperative for the best results.

The officers of the Conference for 1913-14 are as follows: Chairman, James W. Tupper, Lafayette College; Vice-Chairman, William H. Crawshaw, Colgate University; the undersigned, Secretary-Treasurer.

EDGAR C. MORRIS, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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#### THE FIRST MEETING OF THE OREGON COUNCIL

Through the initiative of Miss Rosa B. Parrott, head of the English Department in the Monmouth Normal School, who took up the matter last winter with Edward A. Thurber, head of the Department of Rhetoric in the State University, and Edwin T. Reed, college editor of the State Agricultural College, an Oregon Council of Teachers of English was organized at Salem on the opening day of the Oregon State Teachers' Association, December 23, 1913. The officers of this association are: President, Edward A. Thurber, Department of Rhetoric, University of Oregon; First Vice-President, Mrs. Ida B. Callahan, assistant professor of English, Oregon Agricultural College; Second Vice-President, Miss Jessie B. Goddard, head of the English Department, Lincoln High School, Portland; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Rosa B. Parrott, head of

the English Department, Oregon Normal School; Member at Large, E. F. Carleton, assistant state superintendent; Executive Committee, the officers, together with M. G. Merriam, English Department, Reed College, and Miss Lois E. Owen, High School, English Department, Baker. The program presented at the two sessions of the Council was as follows: Address, "The Work of the National Council of English," Edward A. Thurber; Organization of the State Council; Round Table, "Problems of the Twentieth-Century Teacher of English," conducted by Miss Rosa B. Parrott. This included, besides remarks by President J. H. Ackerman of the State Teachers' Association, and Mr. L. R. Traver, two careful papers by teachers of English, Mrs. Mabel H. Parsons, of the State University, who presented, from original data, collected chiefly from college-student testimony, a brilliant analysis of the stumbling-blocks in the way of a mastery of English, oral and written, and Miss Florence R. Wagner, of the Ashland high school, who gave convincing evidence of the value of seeking definite results, and clear-cut effects, in classroom English, particularly oral English. This was followed by: "Co-operation of Other Departments with the English Department," Miss Jessie B. Goddard; "Oral English," S. H. Peterson, instructor in Public Speaking, Oregon Agricultural College; "What Should English Do for the High-School Student?" M. G. Merriam.

At the suggestion of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction the Council is to undertake, among other important activities, the compilation of a "Course in English for State High Schools," which will be published, with a comment of interpretation, under the auspices of the State Department of Education. President Thurber appointed the following persons on this committee: Edwin T. Reed, Oregon Agricultural College; Mrs. M. H. Parsons, University of Oregon; Miss Lois E. Owen, Baker High School; Miss Jessie Goddard, Lincoln High School, Portland; Miss Florence R. Wagner, Ashland High School.

EDWIN T. REED

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#### ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH OF NEW JERSEY

The autumn meeting of the New Jersey association was held in Newark on November 23. About one hundred were in attendance.

The topic of the morning session was "The Present Momentous Conditions in the Teaching of English." This was discussed by Charles S. Hartwell, president of the New York City association, and by Charles W. Evans, of East Orange, William Wiener, principal of the Central High School in Newark, and George J. Steinmetz, of Paterson.



At the afternoon session Mr. Hasic, secretary of the National Council, gave an address on "Some Things English Teachers Should Be Thankful For." This called out appreciative remarks from Mr. Hartwell, Mr. Dorey, of Trenton, Miss Coult, of Newark, Mr. Hulbert, of Park Ridge, and Mr. Mirick, of the State Department at Trenton. Mr. Hulbert moved that a committee be appointed to draw up a statement as to the amount of work which may be demanded of English teachers throughout the state, and the motion was carried.

During the meeting several other matters of business were attended to. The dues were increased to one dollar in order to provide sufficient funds for the publication of a leaflet. Mr. Gilhuly, of South Market Street School in Newark, was made chairman of a committee to cooperate with Professor Hopkins in his investigation of the conditions of English work in elementary schools. George Harris, of Morristown, was appointed secretary-treasurer by President Atkinson to fill the vacancy made by the resignation of Arthur Wakefield. Mr. Mertz, of Trenton, reported that his committee was actively engaged in calling to the attention of school officials throughout the state the present deplorable conditions, which he demonstrated by means of a series of charts. Mr. Atkinson called attention to the report of the Joint Committee on Uniform Grammatical Nomenclature and urged that all teachers study it carefully, remembering that it is a preliminary and not a final report. Mr. Underwood, the editor of the leaflet, reported that, though the project is in its infancy, there is good prospect of success.

G. H.

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#### NEW ASSOCIATIONS IN MAINE AND IN NASHVILLE

Branches of the National Council of Teachers of English have been organized in the state of Maine and in the city of Nashville. The Maine Council was launched at Colby College in Waterville on January 14, 1914, under the guidance of Roland P. Gray, of the University of Maine. The officers elected include Professor Gray as president; W. H. Harthorn, of Bates College, vice-president; E. K. Maxfield, of Colby College, secretary-treasurer; and G. R. Elliott of Bowdoin College, editor. They apparently have no fear of college domination in Maine.

The Nashville association was organized in a preliminary way several months ago. The final steps were taken January 20 by the election of the permanent officers and the adoption of a constitution. The officers are: president, Edwin Mims, of Vanderbilt University; vice-president,

Mary L. Goodwin, of the Nashville High School; secretary-treasurer, Annie C. Allison of the Girls' Preparatory School. The Association voted to affiliate with the National Council. The principal paper read was on "The Correlation of Current Magazines and Other English Work," by Carl G. Burkitt, of the Hume-Fogg High School.

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#### AN ENGLISH CONFERENCE AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

There will be a conference of teachers of English during the first week of the Shakespeare festival at Stratford-on-Avon. This will be the first week of August, 1914. Those present will be able to attend the Shakespearian plays, lectures, demonstrations, etc., of the festival and meet in the mornings for conference on the teaching of English. Among the topics proposed for discussion are: "English Phonetics," "Oral Composition," "Acting in Schools," "Story-telling," "The Teaching of Shakespeare." The list of sponsors includes F. R. Benson, director of the festival, A. C. Bradley, Sidney Lee, J. W. McKail, Walter Rippmann, and John Bailey. The secretary is Dorothy M. Macarble, who may be addressed at Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, England.

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*Leaflet No. 4* of the New Jersey association is devoted to a report of "Conditions for Teaching English in New Jersey," by Paul A. Mertz. A very interesting body of facts is gathered under the following heads: "Training of Teachers," "Salaries," "Number of Pupils to the Teacher," "Size of Classes," "Length of Periods," "The Course of Study," "Selection of Textbooks," "Articulation with Grammar School," "Equipment," "Co-operation," "Conference with Pupils," "School Organizations," and "Outside Reading." The conclusions are similar to those reached by the Hopkins committee of the Council and hence have value as confirming the report of that committee.

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The English section of the State Teachers' Association of Colorado has appointed a committee to collect information concerning the English work actually being done in the schools of that state. The Committee is made up of one representative from the Elementary schools, one from the high schools, and one from the colleges. The committee will visit as many schools as possible and will supplement its observations with statements from teachers as to special difficulties and the means used to overcome them.